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AN APPRAISAL OF THE BOMBING OF NORTH VIETNAM



(THROUGH 16 FEBRUARY 1967) FEBRUARY 1967

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Prepared Jointly by
The Central Intelligence Agency
and
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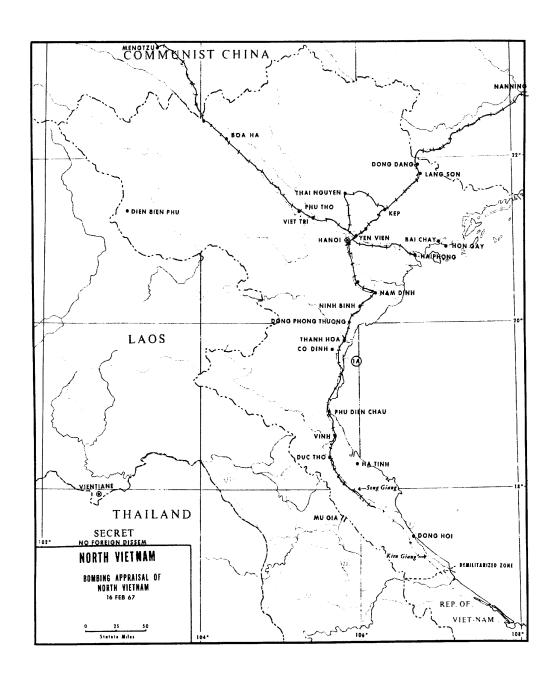
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AN APPRAISAL OF THE BOMBING OF NORTH VIETNAM THROUGH 16 FEBRUARY 1967

FOREWORD

This report is prepared on a monthly basis at the request of the Secretary of Defense for an evaluation of certain effects of the ROLLING THUNDER program. The report covers three general areas of concern: Effects on Military Targets; Leadership and Public Reactions; and Effects on the NVN Economy. The discussion of political effects is limited to those developments within North Vietnam which relate to Hanoi's attitude toward continuing the war and the effects the ROLLING THUNDER attack has on civilian morale in North Vietnam.

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AN APPRAISAL OF THE BOMBING OF NORTH VIETNAM THROUGH 16 FEBRUARY 1967

SUMMARY

- 1. (S/NFD) The preponderance of air strikes against North Vietnam during the reporting period continued to be against lines of communications (LOCs). Rail lines suffered severe although temporary damage and damage to watercraft increased. Inclement weather hampered the air interdiction effort during most of January.
- 2. (S/NFD) All railroad lines were attacked during the reporting period with the exception of the line from Hanoi to Haiphong. But despite the increased level of damage inflicted on the North Vietnamese rail system during January, all of the major lines are now open for at least limited through service. The North Vietnamese are also constructing an increasing number of bypasses for rail yards to reduce the vulnerability of the rail network to air attacks.
- 3. (S/NFD) The bulk of the highway interdiction effort continued to be against the principal roads south of the 20th parallel. However, the effectiveness of the interdiction was limited by the increasingly numerous bypass facilities such as ferries or fording sites, as well as alternate roads and bridges. As an over-all result of the relatively low level of strikes and the stand-down during TET (Vietnamese Lunar New Year), the

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condition of the highway network probably improved slightly during the period.

- 4. (S/NFD) As a result of continued strikes against waterborne traffic, transshipment activities have been widely dispersed and concentrations of vessels, either in port or at sea, have been avoided. Available coastal transport junks have been augmented by fishing vessels and fishermen have reportedly been impressed into coastal transport duty for six-month periods.
- 5. (S/NFD) The North Vietnamese took advantage of the stand-down of the ROLLING THUNDER program during the 96-hour TET truce period to move substantial quantities of supplies. The daily sightings of vessels and trucks in the area between the 17th and 19th parallels were the highest ever noted. Truck traffic moving south into the Mu Gia Pass area during TET was the most ever observed in a four day period. The quantities of supplies moved during the 96-hour stand-down will significantly improve the North Vietnamese logistics posture in the DMZ area, the Laotian Panhandle, and eventually South Vietnam.
- 6. (S/NFD) The North Vietnamese air defense system continues to grow and consumes an increasing portion of the national military effort. The over-all total of North Vietnamese and foreign presence directly and indirectly engaged in air defense is currently estimated at 120-125 thousand military personnel.

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- 7. (S/NFD) The cumulative effects of the air strikes have limited North Vietnam's capability for sustained large scale conventional military operations against South Vietnam. However, the North Vietnamese still retain the capability to support activities in South Vietnam and Laos at present or increased combat levels and force structures.
- 8. (S/NFD) The North Vietnamese leadership's desire to get the US bombing program halted was reflected during the past month in an intensified propaganda and diplomatic campaign. However, the North Vietnamese offered no indication that they would make any reciprocal military deescalation in return for a bombing halt. All evidence continues to indicate that the leadership exercises firm control over the populace and that the deleterious effect of the continued bombings on popular morale has not reached the point where it would force the regime to alter its current policies.
- 9. (S/NFD) Air strikes against North Vietnam during the reporting period caused little direct economic damage, but the cumulative effects of the bombing have continued to disrupt portions of the economy. These cumulative effects have caused considerable economic loss, but the Hanoi regime has been able to adjust its economic activities to the bombing. A major factor in maintaining the economy has been the generous economic aid furnished

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by other Communist countries.

- 10. (S/NFD) Recent reports indicate that the food supply in North Vietnam may have worsened somewhat, although there are still no indications of critical food shortages. Rice production in 1966 is estimated to have been about 300,000 metric tons below the annual average for recent years. Although the rice deficit will create additional problems for the regime, it can be overcome by increased imports of food from other Communist countries. Food imports were unusually large in January, and there are indications that food imports will continue to be unusually heavy at least through March.
- 11. (S/NFD) Unusually large seaborne imports of POL, totaling about 21,300 metric tons, were identified on foreign ships calling at North Vietnam in January, and 8,000 additional tons may have come in. Petroleum stocks in North Vietnam as of mid-February are estimated to be between 50,000 and 60,000 metric tons -- equivalent to between 90 and 110 days of supply. An estimated 1,100 metric tons of POL storage capacity was destroyed by air strikes at Ha Gia during the reporting period.
- 12. (S/NFD) Although seaborne imports of food and petroleum were high, imports of miscellaneous and general cargoes were relatively low in January. Exports of coal and cement continued to lag below normal levels and there continued to be no shipments

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of apatite by sea.

13. (S/NFD) Cumulative measurable damage to economic and military facilities and equipment in North Vietnam inflicted by air strikes during 1965-1966 and January 1967 is estimated at \$215 million. In addition to these costs, there continue to be many other losses to the economy and to the military establishment which cannot be assigned meaningful values.

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Effects on Military Targets

- 1. (S/NFD) The preponderance of air strikes against North Vietnam during the reporting period continued to be against lines of communications (LOCs). Total strikes against highway targets decreased, while strikes against watercraft and rail targets increased. Rail lines suffered severe although temporary damage and damage to watercraft increased over the previous period. Inclement weather hampered the air interdiction effort during most of January. The North Vietnamese again took advantage of a complete stand-down of ROLLING THUNDER operations -- during TET -- to move substantial amounts of supplies south toward the DMZ area and the Laotian Panhandle.
- 2. (S/NFD) All railroad lines were attacked during the reporting period with the exception of the line from Hanoi to Haiphong. Through service on the Hanoi-Dong Dang and Hanoi-Thai Nguyen lines was interrupted for about two days and on the Kep-Thai Nguyen route for approximately a week. The Thai Nguyen rail yard was severely damaged but this had little effect on through traffic. The rail route south from Hanoi to Vinh was the hardest hit -- especially in the areas of Ninh Binh and Dong Phong Thuong -- and it was probably inoperable for through rail service for about two-thirds of the reporting period. However, it is estimated that the line is now open for limited through traffic

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all the way to Vinh as the result of repairs made during TET. Throughout the period through service on the Hanoi-Lao Cai line continued to be limited by the necessity to use freight car ferries at the site of the destroyed bridge at Viet Tri. In addition the line was closed to all through rail traffic for about a fourth of the period by strikes on the line between Viet Tri and Boa Ha.

- 3. (S/NFD) Thus, despite the increased level of damage inflicted on the North Vietnamese rail system during January, all of the major lines are now open for at least limited through service. The North Vietnamese are also constructing an increasing number of bypasses for rail yards to reduce the vulnerability of the rail network to air attacks. Several new spurs, sidings, and at least one yard (just north of Yen Vien) are under construction.
- 4. (S/NFD) The total number of air strikes devoted to highway interdiction decreased and there was a consequent drop in the level of damage inflicted against highway targets. The bulk of the highway interdiction effort continued to be against the principal roads south of the 20th parallel. Most of the road cuts were on Routes 1A, 7, and 15. However, the effectiveness of the interdiction was limited by the increasingly numerous bypass facilities such as ferries or fording sites, as well as alternate roads and bridges. As an over-all result of the relatively low

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level of strikes and the stand-down during TET, the condition of the highway network probably improved slightly during the period.

- 5. (S/NFD) Nevertheless, traffic on the roads must move very slowly over an increasingly circuitous road network. Air interdiction has increased the difficulty of using road transport by creating bottlenecks. These bottlenecks are requiring transshipment by ferry over major water barriers and the use of porters around temporary major road cuts. Such cargo transfers have reduced normal road capacities but the capacity of the road system at the present level of interdiction is still adequate to meet requirements.
- 6. (S/NFD) During January there was a slight increase in the number of watercraft sighted and struck. This activity was concentrated in the Red River delta and along the intracoastal route between the 19th and 21st parallels. As a result of continued strikes against waterborne traffic, transshipment activities have been widely dispersed and concentrations of vessels, either in port or at sea, have been avoided. Available coastal transport junks have been augmented by fishing vessels and fishermen have reportedly been impressed into coastal transport duty for sixmonth periods.
- 7. (S/NFD) The North Vietnamese took advantage of the standdown of the ROLLING THUNDER program during the 96-hour TET truce

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period to move substantial quantities of supplies. The daily sightings of vessels and trucks in the area between the 17th and 19th parallels were the highest ever noted. The majority of the trucks sighted were loading along the Kien Giang and Song Giang Rivers or were moving toward the DMZ or Mu Gia Pass. Truck traffic moving south into the Mu Gia Pass area during TET was the most ever observed in a four day period. In addition a section of the tramway south of Vinh was utilized to move supplies during the truce period. The quantities of supplies moved during the 96-hour stand-down will significantly improve the North Vietnamese logistics posture in the DMZ area, the Laotian Panhandle, and eventually South Vietnam.

8. (S/NFD) In spite of continued damage to the transport system in North Vietnam, it remains able to adequately support the civilian economy, air defense requirements, and the insurgency in South Vietnam and Laos. However, the North Vietnamese apparently have been forced to place much more reliance on primitive forms of transport, and there undoubtedly are periodic delays in the receipt of goods. The relentless mangling of the facilities and equipment of railroads, roads, and watercraft in the area south of Thanh Hoa has not been sufficient to reduce capacity below the small requirements for traffic in this region. The countermeasures taken by the North Vietnamese have been costly in time and effort, but have

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been effective. The air strikes against transportation in the economically more important parts of the country, including the principal routes to China, have not been sufficiently sustained to erode the transport capacity below the volume needed to support the economy and to move economic and military aid. Moreover, aid from other Communist countries has made it possible for North Vietnam generally to maintain inventories of transport equipment in spite of the substantial destruction and damage inflicted on equipment by the air strikes. There is no evidence that the Cultural Revolution in Communist China has disrupted Soviet economic or military aid shipments to North Vietnam by rail.

- 9. (S/NFD) The North Vietnamese air defense system continues to grow and consumes an increasing portion of the national military effort. It is estimated that 83,000 or about 20 per cent of North Vietnam's active military strength is directly engaged in air defense. An additional 27,500 personnel are indirectly involved. In addition about 10-14,000 foreign personnel are supporting the North Vietnamese air defense system. The over-all total of North Vietnamese and foreign presence directly and indirectly engaged in air defense is currently estimated at 120-125 thousand military personnel.
- 10. (S/NFD) The cumulative effects of the air strikes have limited North Vietnam's capability for sustained large scale

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conventional military operations against South Vietnam. However, the North Vietnamese still retain the capability to support activities in South Vietnam and Laos at present or increased combat levels and force structures.

Leadership and Public Reactions

- the US bombing program halted was reflected during the past month in an intensified propaganda and diplomatic campaign. Hanoi radio on 28 January quoted a statement by the North Vietnamese Foreign Minister to pro-Communist journalist Wilfred Burchett that if the US stopped the bombings unilaterally and for good there "could" be "talks." In pushing this line, however, the North Vietnamese offered no indication that they would make any reciprocal military deescalation in return for a bombing halt. At the same time, regime propaganda played up the theme that the US was deliberately bombing civilian targets and used this line to try to heighten international pressure on the US for a halt in the air strikes.
- 12. (S/NFD) There continue to be no signs from within North Vietnam that the bombing raids are creating any insurmountable problems for the regime. All evidence continues to indicate that the leadership exercises firm control over the populace and that the deleterious effect of the continued bombings on popular morale

has not reached the point where it would force the regime to alter its current policies. The leadership has continued to emphasize that the road ahead in the struggle against the US will be long and hard but that it will eventually lead to victory. During the TET period, for example, the regime called upon the populace to put aside holiday celebrations and to work with "vigilance and vigor" to further projects connected with the war effort.

Effects on the Economy

13. (S/NFD) Air strikes against North Vietnam during the reporting period caused little direct economic damage, but the cumulative effects of the bombing have continued to disrupt portions of the economy. These cumulative effects have caused considerable economic loss, but the Hanoi regime has been able to adjust its economic activities to the bombing. The dispersal of some industry, problems in management, and reallocations of manpower are creating difficulties. However, North Vietnam continues to negotiate with other Communist countries for additional industrial plants. A major factor in maintaining the economy has been the generous economic aid furnished by other Communist countries. Economic aid to North Vietnam amounted to \$150 million* in 1965 and \$275 million in 1966 compared with \$75 million in 1964.

14. (S/NFD) Recent reports indicate that the food supply in North Vietnam may have worsened somewhat, although there are still * US dollars are used throughout this appraisal.

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no indications of critical food shortages. Rice production in 1966 is estimated to have been about 300,000 metric tons below the annual average for the past several years of about 4.5 million metric tons. The 1966 short-fall resulted from a combination of poor planning and lack of coordination and declining labor productivity -- both caused, at least in part, from the disruptions of the bombing -- and adverse weather conditions. Temporary shortages of labor which normally occur during peak workloads in the crop cycle undoubtedly have been intensified by the drawing off of some men for new construction, repair activities, civil defense, and military duties. The manpower drain has been only partially relieved by the greater use of women. Although the rice deficit will create additional problems for the regime, it can be overcome by increased imports of food from other Communist countries and/or by substituting other domestically produced foods for rice. Identified seaborne imports of bulk foodstuffs, consisting mainly of wheat flour, corn, and rice, totaled 23,800 metric tons in January, compared with an average monthly volume of 6,400 metric tons in 1966. This volume was unusually large for a January, and there are indications that food imports will continue to be unusually heavy at least through March.

15. (S/NFD) In spite of the bombing, North Vietnam is still showing signs of expanding its industrial base with the help of

the other Communist countries. The most recent area of intended expansion is food-processing, but investment in other industrial projects also continues to be considered. Hungary has recently agreed to construct several small food-processing plants -- one for rice flour and corn meal and two for the production of vegetable oil. North Vietnam also recently requested Hungary to construct about 15 plants for the manufacture of jars, plastic containers, and packing materials for processed foods. Other industrial projects being negotiated include the expansion of the Tinh Tuc Tin Mine and its processing plant, which will provide additional exports to earn badly needed foreign exchange.

- 16. (S/NFD) Additional evidence has been received that the Hanoi Machine Tool and Engineering Plant was partially relocated during 1966. Photography taken on 23 September and 4 November 1966 showed little activity around the plant. A Cuban correspondent who visited what was probably the Hanoi Machine Tool and Engineering Plant in November 1966 described the plant's operation and its relocation to 12 different sites. Plant officials admitted that the relocation had created production difficulties, especially in the transportation of raw materials. In spite of the relocation, the remainder of the plant was reportedly operating 24-hours a day.
- 17. (S/NFD) There were no strikes or restrikes against electric power facilities during January, and the estimate of

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generating capacity out of operation remains at 59,000 kilowatts, about one-third of the total national capacity. The continued presence of Soviet engineers at the Uong Bi Power Plant suggests that salvage or possible restoration work is in progress. However, it is estimated that an additional six to eight months would be necessary to even partially repair the heavy damage inflicted in August 1966. Recent aerial photography of the Co Dinh Power Plant, restruck in November 1966, confirms that it is almost completely destroyed. The plant was not in operation at the time of the restrike and no attempt had been made to repair the damage inflicted in mid-1965.

18. (S/NFD) There is no evidence that the loss of petroleum or petroleum storage facilities has weakened seriously the economy of North Vietnam. Unusually large amounts of seaborne imports of POL, totaling about 21,300 metric tons, were identified on foreign ships calling at North Vietnam in January. A possible additional 8,000 metric tons of POL may have been imported in January, which if confirmed would bring the month's imports by sea to the highest level since May 1966. In the first half of February, 7,600 metric tons of petroleum arrived by sea. Petroleum stocks in North Vietnam as of mid-February are estimated to be between 50,000 and 60,000 metric tons* -- equivalent to between 90 and 110 days

^{*} Excluding the unconfirmed 8,000 metric tons reported for January.

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of supply. An estimated 1,100 metric tons of storage capacity were destroyed by air strikes at Ha Gia during the reporting period.

19. (S/NFD) Although seaborne imports of food and petroleum were high, imports of miscellaneous and general cargoes were relatively low in January, totaling 18,800 metric tons compared with an average monthly volume of 34,700 metric tons in 1966. These imports included rolled steel, generators, tractors, barges, paper, and textiles from the USSR, and 3,000 metric tons of coking coal from China. No new direct effects of the bombing program on seaborne exports were noted in January, but exports of coal and cement continued to lag below normal levels and there continued to be no shipments of apatite by sea. A ship apparently loaded coal for export at Haiphong in January, indicating that the mine at Vang Danh, located north of Port Redon, probably has become operational. This mine was restored with Soviet aid. Port Redon is considerably closer to Haiphong than Hon Gay, which has been the principal source of coal used in the Haiphong area. With the Vang Danh mine operating, fewer barges will be needed to meet Haiphong's requirements.

20. (S/NFD) Cumulative measurable damage to economic and military facilities and equipment in North Vietnam inflicted by air strikes during 1965-1966 and January 1967 is estimated at \$215 million. (See Tab B). Much of the increase in the cost over

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the previous reporting period results from recent additional information on damage that had been inflicted during 1966. Of the total damage, about \$70 million resulted from air strikes during 1965 about \$130 million from air strikes in 1966, and about \$15 million from air strikes in January 1967. In addition to these costs, there continue to be many other losses to the economy and to the military establishment which cannot be assigned meaningful values.

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RESULTS OF STRIKES ON NVN TARGETS a/ THRU 11 FEBRUARY 1967

				Targ				% Of Nationalg/
Fixed Targets	Targets		Struck		b/ Capacity g/			
G	National c/ JCS d/		s <u>d</u> /	<u>d</u> /		Destroyed or in-		Ū
	Capacity -	Targ				No. <u>e</u> /	Strike	active because
	(X 1000)	No(*)	%	No(*)	%	Attacks	Sorties	of air strikes.
Barracks	443 men	65	41.08	46	25.5	243	2441	23.04
Ammo Depots	112.6 MT	18	1.00	13	72.2	53	1157	69.3
POL Storage *	133.4	13	100	13	100	76	657	82.6
Supply Depots	10550 SQFT	27	40.77	18	18	56	649	13.86
Power Plants	187 KW	20	94.5	8	46.6	34	283	30.3
Maritime Ports	7.8 ST/DY	8	95	6	44	27	235	16.2
Railroad Yards	33.7 ST/DY	4	78	3	54	31	294	14.0
Explosive Plant	1 MT	1	100	11	100	3	28	71
Airfields	23	11		14	19d/	12	359	19
Naval Bases	15	5		3	42d/	20	219	19.5
Bridges	1 , 234	61		48		280	2745	49.4(of those tgtd)
Commo Install	45	5		2		2	15	20
Radar Sites	160	5		5		73	430	42.9
SAM Sites	134			58		112	388	
Locks & Dams	91	8		2	10.6	2	10	5.3
Ferries	34			11		7	1414	
	,, <u>, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , </u>			·	moto 1	Sonties	10 16/1	Recults f/

Results Total Sorties: 10,164 *JCS targets only; does not Armed Recce Sorties Destroyed Damaged 4451 include dispersed storage. 99,457 Vessels 8233 2377 Vehicles 2548 1508 RR Stock

NOTE: For comparative purposes.

a/ Assessments are based on best information received, will be refined as more accurate information becomes available.

b/ Strike plus flak suppression sorties. Some applied to multiple targets; in this summary assigned to principal target.

c/ National capacity in 1,000's where measurement shown.

 $[\]overline{\mathrm{d}}/$ Percentages of national capacity where appropriate.

e/ Also numerous attacks during armed recce and other missions.
f/ Also numerous installations, AA sites, bridges, etc, attacked and road and rail cuts made.

g/Per cent inactive due to dismantling or abandonment of facilities as a result of air strikes.

^(*) These columns are not additive, since the number of installations, both targeted and struck in some cases, apply to more than one category of targets. (i.e., barracks, supply and ammo depots).

US world-wide ammo storage capacity is 6,936,000 metric tons (CONUS 5,719,000 MT).

US world-wide military POL storage capacity is 15,452,000 MT; national US commercial capacity is 151,325,000 MT; approximate average \$ value of 1 MT of POL products is \$28.

US world-wide military supply depot covered storage space is 137,100,000 sq. ft. (CONUS 121,300,000 sq. ft.).

Total kilowatt capacity of power plants serving metropolitan areas: New York - 7.6 million; Chicago - 6 million; Washington (DC and Md/suburbs only) - 2.4 million.

Value of Damage to Economic and Military Facilities and Equipment Attacked Under The ROLLING THUNDER Program 1965-1966 and January 1967

Economic Facilities and Equipment

Military Facilities and Equipment

Direct Losses M	lillion US \$	Direct Losses	Million US \$
Railroad/Highway Bridges Transportation Equipment Electric Power Plants Petroleum Manufacturing Facilities Railroad Yards Maritime Ports Miscellaneous Armed	36.4 <u>c</u> / 12.5 6.9 a/	Barracks Ammunition Depots Supply Depots Airfields Radar and Communics Sites SAM Sites	2.8 <u>d</u> / 7.9 <u>a</u> /
Reconnaissance	1.3	Naval Bases Aircraft	1.6 T 30.3
Subtotal, Direct Losse Indirect Losses	s 85.1	Naval Craft Miscellaneous Armed Reconnaissance	8.1 i 5.2
Exports Agriculture e/ Fishing	16.7 25.5 5.0	Total, Direct	82.5 Total Llion US \$
Subtotal, Indirect Los	,,,	Economic Military	132 83
Total, Direct and Indi	rect 132.3	Total	215

a. Estimate is incomplete because of inadequate post-strike photography.
b. Of the total, \$3.3 million is estimated to have been expended to date
on the repair of damaged and destroyed bridges and \$19.1 million is estimated
for complete restoration in the future of bridges damaged or destroyed. In
addition, \$1.2 million would be required to make temporary repairs to presently
unrepaired bridges. Contrary to the methodology used in the previous appraisals,
the latter estimate has been excluded from the total because there is no
assurance that temporary repairs will be undertaken on all the remaining unrepaired bridges. As a result, the total is slightly less than the figure
reported last month.

c. Excluding the cost of trucks destroyed and damaged in Laos and water-craft destroyed and damaged by US naval operations along the coast of southern North Vietnam.

d. Including only JCS-targeted radar and communications sites. The estimated cost of radar destroyed by armed reconnaissance air strikes has been transferred to the cost given for "Miscellaneous Armed Reconnaissance."

e. It should be noted that losses of agricultural crops are arbitrarily attributed entirely to the indirect effects of the bombing. An unknown part of these losses is in fact due to weather and other natural causes.

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ARMY:	
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ACSI-CI	1 Cy
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STAG	1 Cy
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AP	l Cy
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AP-2D1	l Cy
AP-2D2	l Cy
AP - 3	l Cy
AP-4	l Cy
AP-4A	l Cy
AP-4A2 (Pent)	6 Cys
AP-4A2 (AHS)	4 Cys
AP-4B4	2 Cys
AP-4C	3 Cys
AP-7	2 Cys
AP-8	2 Cys
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